

AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

January 29, 2003

Colonel James G. May  
Jacksonville District Commander  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
400 West Bay Street, P.O. Box 4970  
Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Maureen Finnerty  
Superintendent  
Everglades National Park  
40001 State Road 9336  
Homestead, FL 33034-6733

Jay Slack  
Florida Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1339 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
Vero Beach, FL 32961-2676

Henry Dean  
Executive Director  
South Florida Water Management District  
3301 Gun Club Road  
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

Dear Colonel May, Superintendent Finnerty, Supervisor Slack and Executive Director Dean:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to inquire about the status of the Purpose and Need statement of the Combined Structural and Operational Plan (CSOP) for the Modified Water Deliveries and C-111 Projects and to provide our comments on this statement. As some of our organizations recently informed the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, a Purpose and Need statement that accurately reflects congressionally authorized project purposes is a fundamental condition for the participation of any of our organizations in a collaborative stakeholder Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. Your agencies must agree to what will be accomplished before a stakeholder process can be forged to assist you in the task.

It is absolutely critical that your agencies utilize the original congressionally authorized purposes of these projects as the basis for completing the Purpose and Need statement. As outlined in the project documents, the Modified Water Deliveries and C-111 Projects were authorized “to improve water deliveries to Everglades National Park and ... restore natural hydrologic conditions,” and restore “the ecosystem in Taylor Slough and the eastern panhandle of ENP.” In addition, the C-111 Project as authorized by Congress and represented by the 1994 Final Integrated General Reevaluation Report (GRR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) states that it “also focuses on preserving the current level of flood protection” (Sec 1.3.1). The January 2002 C-111 Final Integrated GRR Supplement and Environmental Assessment highlights the pre-project, existing levels of flood protection “that are consistent with the 1994 C-111 GRR” (Section 5.13.2), and should serve as the basis for the project’s design.

Specifically, it is inappropriate to use the ISOP 2001 operations as a “new” baseline for these projects.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the flood protection analysis conducted for the CSOP should be confined only to the C-111 drainage basin in accordance with the projects’ authorizations. Introducing stormwater from outside of the C-111 basin is inconsistent with the purposes of maintaining flood protection only as a result of increases in seepage from Everglades National Park.

In sum, these projects were not authorized to *enhance* flood protection. If flood protection can be enhanced by these projects, without compromising in any way the congressionally authorized restoration objectives, then these are ancillary benefits to which we have no objection. Such increased flood protection, however, cannot be established as a goal to be achieved at the expense of restoration and should not result in the diversion of funds from the project’s restoration purposes. Any efforts to enhance flood protection must be consistent with the authorized goal of restoring the ecological conditions of the Park.

We hope an adequate final Purpose and Need statement is completed soon in order to expedite the CSOP EIS process and ensure that these projects are not further delayed. Once again, we emphasize that it is crucial that such purposes and needs be explicitly and adequately laid out before any of our organizations would consider participating in a multi-stakeholder advisory process for the CSOP.

In addition, the MOU states that “within 60 days following the effective date of this MOU, the parties shall develop and agree upon a detailed set of ground rules for their interagency collaboration on CSOP.” We are encouraged by the generalized commitment to the CSOP process as contemplated by the MOU, but to our knowledge, no ground rules have been issued and the 60-day deadline has passed. We are interested in the schedule for its release.

We would like to meet with you about the status of the Purpose and Need statement and intend to call you in the next week to see if you are available to arrange a date and time. We look forward to working with you and your staff to finally take these long-delayed, vital steps toward restoring America’s Everglades.

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<sup>1</sup> The Corps stated in the 2002 Supplemental GRR that they “will not reformulate the already authorized C-111 Project as described in the 1994 C-111 GRR” (Executive Summary).

Sincerely,

John Adornato, III  
Regional Representative  
National Parks Conservation Association

Erin Deady  
Environmental Counsel  
Audubon of Florida

Shannon Estenoz  
Director  
Everglades Program  
World Wildlife Fund

Bradford H. Sewell  
Senior Attorney  
Natural Resources Defense Council

Signatures waived to expedite delivery

cc: Colonel Terrence "Rock" Salt, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force  
Anne Klee, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force  
Rick Smith, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group  
Mike Eng, U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution